

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Neutral Convener for the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council

Grant Report

June 28, 2013

Project Description: The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Center) served as neutral convener for the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC), a stakeholder body that advises the State Ocean Caucus (SOC, an interagency team of state agencies) and the Governor's Office on ocean policy and management issues along Washington's Pacific Coast.

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2010, coastal Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) and Washington State natural resource agencies began discussing the need for a Washington coast-wide group to advise the State on ocean policy issue and provide local perspectives on, and solutions to, marine resource issues, projects and conflicts. Coastal MRCs organized a series of discussions to outline the purpose and role of a coastal group and developed a recommendation to the SOC to form a coastal stakeholder advisory body. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), on behalf of the SOC and the Governor's Office, is coordinating the WCMAC focusing on marine and ocean policy issues on Washington's Pacific Ocean Coast (from Cape Flattery south), including the estuaries of Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay and the lower Columbia River. In 2012, at request of the stakeholders who helped design the process, Ecology retained the Center to serve as neutral convener, providing facilitation and coordination services to support the WCMAC in conducting its meetings and reaching decisions. In 2013, Ecology and the WCMAC requested the Center continue serving as the neutral convener of the WCMAC through June 30, 2013. The participating interests expressed a strong preference for a university-based convener, and one affiliated with WSU Extension in particular. Amanda Murphy, Center Project/Research Specialist and WSU Extension faculty served as the project manager and facilitator. Center Associate Director Rob McDaniel served as strategic advisor and provided additional facilitation expertise.

The Center is a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the state of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Center provides expertise to improve the quality and availability of voluntary collaborative approaches for policy development and multi-party dispute resolution. The Center is a joint effort of Washington's two research universities and was developed in response to requests from community leaders. Building on the unique strengths of the two institutions, the Center is dedicated to assisting public, private, tribal, non-profit and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. The Center also advances the teaching and research missions of the two universities by bringing real-world policy issues to the campuses. The Center is hosted at the University of Washington (UW) by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, and at Washington State University (WSU) by WSU

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Extension (Please see Attachment A. for an overview of the Center; additional information is available at www.ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu).

PROJECT ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES

The Center carried out the activities called for in the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) grant by successfully facilitating and coordinating the work of the WCMAC (Please see Attachment B. for a list of WCMAC members). The Center's tasks associated with the grant were performed during October 1, 2012 – June 28, 2013. Specific activities completed included the following:

Meeting Preparation

The Center assisted the Agenda Committee in coordinating agenda development and meeting planning for five WCMAC meetings during October 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013. The Center coordinated and facilitated seven, approximately one hour Agenda Committee conference calls to discuss the meeting design, agenda and planning. The Center assisted the committee in developing each meeting agenda, distributing agendas and meeting materials to the WCMAC for review, and organizing and securing logistics of each meeting. The Center also held numerous conference calls with the WCMAC Chair and Vice Chair to discuss planning and actions items of the Council in preparation for each meeting.

Meeting Management and Facilitation

WCMAC Meetings. The Center provided facilitation and meeting management support for each of the five WCMAC meetings. The support provided by the Center ensured the meeting process conception, design, formulation and execution was appropriate to the situation, creative and conducive to making consistent progress. The Center utilized a number of structured approaches, including work sessions, forming committees to address specific tasks, and providing shuttled diplomacy between members and the agencies. These approaches were used to help the participants communicate effectively, explore important issues and develop agreed upon tasks.

Executive Committee. The Center coordinated and facilitated nine, approximately one hour Executive Committee (Chair, Vice-Chair and Ecology) conference calls. Executive Committee calls were held prior to each meeting (to discuss meeting preparation, logistics, and information sharing) and within two weeks after each meeting (to discuss what went well and what did not, and next steps).

Mission Statement Workgroup. At the July 2012 meeting, the WCMAC formed a workgroup to draft a mission statement and goals for the Council to review at the October meeting. The Center coordinated and facilitated the work of the group including three conference calls, drafting mission statement options for the group to review and modify, and preparing materials for the committee to present to the Council. This led to a finalized mission statement the WCMAC adopted by consensus at the October 10, 2012 meeting.

MSP Project Committee. The WCMAC created a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Project Committee

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to help review early results of year one Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) projects, identify remaining data gaps and needs, and advise the agencies on next round of project RFP's. The Center coordinated and facilitated six, approximately one hour conference calls with the Committee and its leadership. The Center coordinated work tasks, developed and distributed notes from the conference calls, and assisted in the organizing and distilling of information to generate the Councils goals and objectives (Please see Attachment C. for MSP Project Committee call notes).

Administrative Duties

The Center provided administrative support for the WCMAC that included coordinating and scheduling of meetings, note taking, producing and distributing meeting summaries and materials, and tracking of decisions and action items (Please see Attachment D. for the decision and action item list and Attachment E. for WCMAC meeting summaries). The Center also coordinated and scheduled conference calls, provided note taking, and tracked decisions and action items for the WCMACs committees and workgroups. Arrangements regarding meeting venue, food, and rentals were also organized by the Center.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As the neutral convener, the Center provided process ideas, strategies, approaches, alternative methods and procedures to promote the work of the Council. The Center gained the confidence of the involved participants by conducting a situation assessment at the start of the project, and worked closely with the Council's Executive Committee to keep discussions moving forward, encourage participation by all members, document decisions and action items, and enforce the Council's ground rules. The Center was successful in its role to help keep the WCMAC focused on agreed upon tasks, encourage communication to improve understanding among members and the agencies, and to enhance the possibilities for progress on issues.

Below is a brief summary of the Council's meetings and accomplishments from October 1, 2012 – June 28, 2013. The results belong to the members and parties themselves; the Center provided an independent forum and resources that created the possibility for these results to take shape. (For more information about the Council's accomplishments, see Attachment D. for the decision and action item list and Attachment E. for meeting summaries).

October 10, 2012 Meeting

At its fourth and final meeting of 2012, the WCMAC agreed on a mission statement, received updates from agencies on action taken on CMSP guidance the Council provided at the previous meeting, reflected on the WCMACs 2012 and celebrated success.

During the meeting, the Council discussed with WDNR progress to date on the CMSP spending plan and formed a committee to work with WDNR to identify priorities and projects for CMSP for potential funding in the next biennial budget. Dr. Richard Feely (who is responsible for development and implementation of chemical oceanographic research studies for several of NOAA's national research programs) gave a presentation on ocean acidification that was well received by the Council and meeting attendees. The Council also agreed on its mission statement:

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“The Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council is a strong voice for coastal communities on marine resource issues, protecting and preserving existing sustainable uses, marine-based economies and healthy marine ecosystems.”

At the end of the meeting, the Center presented a list of the Councils accomplishments, to demonstrate the great amount of work completed and goals achieved. Each member was asked to share their perspectives on the accomplishments of the Council and what they hoped to see accomplished next year. Members were overall pleased with the amount of work they had completed in 2012. Goals for 2013 included:

- Future thinking and action planning of meetings, presentations, and information sharing
- Establishing goals and objectives for the Council and CMSP
- More engagement and improving relationships with the coastal tribes
- Better interfaces, more interactions with agencies and decision makers
- Identifying and learning about members’ interests, issues, goals and concerns to better understand where commonalities are among members
- Increasing the pace, moving beyond process and focusing on actionable tasks
- Discussing scale of issues along the coast

January 25, 2013 Meeting

WCMAC held its first meeting of 2013 on January 25 hosting coastal legislators to share their perspectives on CMSP on Washington’s coast, activities related to the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification, and legislation that may have impact on coastal communities. After that, the Center facilitated a work session to help the WCMAC chart out priority issues to address in 2013, and a timeline with identified meeting dates and actions (Council and committee tasks, meeting presentations, CMSP related events and tasks, SOC activities, etc.) to address those issues. During the work session, the Council decided to form a Subcommittee to develop criteria for evaluating potential projects on the coast, identified future meeting educational topics, and confirmed meeting dates through June.

The WCMAC received a report out from its MSP Project Committee, and decided that members and each coastal MRC would develop a list of their CMSP goals and objectives in advance of the CMSP objective setting workshops coordinated by WA Sea Grant. The Committee provided members with a template for listing goals and objectives to complete. The Center worked with the Committee following the meeting to compile the WCMAC’s shared CMSP goals and objectives (Attachment F.)

March 28, 2013 Meeting

As part of Washington’s CMSP strategy, Washington Sea Grant helped coordinate a series of workshops with WCMAC and other stakeholder groups—along with local, state, and federal agencies, and tribes—to develop an agreed upon vision, goals, principles, boundary and a series of

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planning options to begin the planning and implementation of CMSP. In preparation for these workshops, the WCMAC held a meeting in March to discuss members' CMSP goals and objectives. The MSP Project Committee presented the results from its work compiling the Councils shared CMSP goals and objectives. With minimal modifications the WCMAC supported the CMSP Shared Priority List and applauded the work of the Committee.

The MSP Project Committee was also tasked with identifying project proposals to submit for available CMSP funds. The Committee met via conference calls and decided to put forth a proposal to fund additional public outreach CMSP workshops, hosted by each coastal MRC. Surfrider Foundation submitted the proposal, it was accepted by WDNR, and each coastal MRC organized its workshop.

During this meeting the WCMAC also discussed legislation ESB 5603 (which would convert WCMAC to a Council housed at the Governor's Office, instead of Ecology and the State Ocean Caucus) and spent time hearing from each member for his or her thoughts, concerns and level of support for this proposal.

April 26, 2013 Meeting

At the April meeting, the WCMAC Project Evaluation Committee provided an update on its work to compile a list of potential projects/new uses meant to serve as a starting point for the WCMAC to discuss and build upon. The Council provided input on the project types/new uses categories and criteria, and on where the boundaries of CMSP begin and end. WDNR provided a short presentation on the CMSP Planning Development Team, charged with developing the web site and planning tools for the CMSP process. The Council was shown a prototype of the Washington CMSP mapping application and provided input. To assist with this outreach and tool development, the Planning Team asked for and the WCMAC selected two WCMAC members to join the Team.

June 5, 2013 Meeting

The WCMAC met in June to receive updates on CMSP projects, continue discussing the Project Evaluation Committee's potential new uses list, and to discuss next steps and transitioning into a new council under the Governor's Office. With ESB 5603 taking effect July 28th, this was the last formal meeting of the WCMAC, as an advisory body under Ecology. The Governor's Office representative spoke and answered questions about the transition and becoming a council under the Governor's Office.

During the meeting, the WCMAC discussed constituents' possible concerns with potential proposed projects, which led to discussion about the importance of having enough information on issues in order to have an informed discussion and offer input. Members decided a process for dealing with requests for input was needed. The WCMAC also received updates on CMSP projects and provided advice to the agencies on the goals and boundary for CMSP.

This was the Center's final meeting with the WCMAC. The Center's involvement had been to help the Council set up a process, build organizational capacity and provide facilitation and meeting

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management assistance. Having done this, the Council now expressed more of a need for staff support than the collaborative public policy facilitation and related services that the Center provides. The Center explained that with the transition to the new Council this is an appropriate time for the Center's involvement to transition out. The Center thanked the WCMAC for being able to be a part of the process and the Council thanked and applauded the Center for its work.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Participating in this project allowed the Center to build new relationships with coastal stakeholders, agencies and the funding entities.

Members see the WCMAC as an important venue to provide local input and perspectives that will better inform the state about the objectives and concerns coastal stakeholders have about ocean policies. The Council's diverse, coast wide representation and active engagement of its membership provided opportunities to build a more common understanding among members and the agencies about each other's interests and the rationale for their positions. Members believe that continuing to build understanding will result in better working relationships and shared solutions.

In 2012, at the start of the project, there was proposed legislation (SB 6169) to convert the newly formed WCMAC to a Washington Coastal Solutions Council housed at the Governor's Office, instead of Ecology and the SOC. Planning and preparing materials for meetings was challenging due to the uncertainty of what would happen with the legislation and future structure of the Council.

Governor Gregoire subsequently vetoed the Washington Coastal Solutions Council section of SB 6263, citing a desire to avoid creating a new advisory body in the current economic climate and when the WCMAC already exists.

The Governor also stated that she was committed to ensuring that the state agencies work collaboratively with communities on ocean policy development, and therefore assigned a representative from her office to actively participate on the WCMAC, to monitor progress. Recognizing the importance for coastal communities of having a venue to inform the State about ocean issues, and the Governor's commitment to ensuring the state agencies work collaboratively with communities, the WCMAC decided to support the Council as it was originally formed under Ecology.

During the assessment interviews, most members stated that the WCMAC should operate by consensus; however, many were concerned about situations where one or two members would block the group from reaching consensus. Many suggested the group have a clearly defined process for consensus decision making but that a backup process (such as majority voting) be available. At the first meeting, the Center explained how the goal of consensus is for the group to work collaboratively to achieve better solutions, in which all members agree to support because they know it is the best one for the group. Because the group is an advisory (not decision-making) body, it does not need to make decisions by majority rule. Doing so could remove the incentive for members to truly commit to addressing each other's interests and needs. Rather, the Council's authority and effectiveness will come from the degree that it is able to express a unified "voice of the coast" on

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issues of importance to coastal communities. For this reason, the Center recommended the WCMAC use a well-defined and -conducted consensus process.

The Center worked with the Council to adopt a consensus methodology that included mechanisms for ensuring full and fair discussion of issues, timely determination of whether the group can establish full or partial consensus on those issues, and expressing the different opinions held and the rationale behind those opinions. Ultimately, the WCMAC did decide to use a modified Robert's Rules approach and included majority voting as a backup process. This decision making process often emphasized position taking, by having to start a conversation with a proposal and a second.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, the Legislature appropriated funds to WDNR to develop a spending plan for CMSP planning for the outer coast, and to submit a list of priority projects for funding consideration in the 2013–15 Biennium. WCMAC was able to participate in this process, submit projects for consideration and weigh in on funding for potential projects.

In 2013, legislation (ESB 5603) to convert the WCMAC to Council housed at the Governor's Office was again proposed. Similar to the situation and dynamics that occurred in 2012, planning and preparing materials for meetings was challenging due to uncertainty of what would happen with the legislation. ESB 5603 did pass and was signed by the Governor. The WCMAC will be reformulated under the Governor's office during the Fall of 2013.